

The Smell  
o' the Turf

S. S. McCurr



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## The Smell o' the Turf

*By the same Author:*  
“*IN KESWICK VALE*  
& *OTHER LYRICS*”

THE  
**SMELL O' THE TURF**

VERSES BY  
**SAMUEL S. McCURRY**

With an Introduction by  
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*"Let us go forth into the field."*—SONG OF SOLOMON

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To

**CHRISTABEL**

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## PREFACE

THESE essays in verse represent the work of those occasional hours of leisure which remain after a busy life day by day in the City, hours:

“When to the sessions of sweet silent thought  
I summon up remembrance of things past,”  
and weave rhymes chiefly for the pleasure of my  
family and friends.

The kindly reception accorded to my previous little book, *In Keswick Vale and Other Lyrics*, encourages me to hope that the present collection, with all its limitations, may be also acceptable.

Under the title “Ballads of Ballytumulty,” I have included some pieces written for the most part in the dialect of Ulster which I hope will appeal to

my fellow-countrymen; though it is possible that many of the Scots words introduced may not be so familiar to them as they were to me in days of boyhood. In these ballads I have attempted to illustrate some of the humour and pathos peculiar to my native North, which becomes not less dear as time advances.

S. S. McC.

*Glenageary,  
Co. Dublin.*

## INTRODUCTION

THIS is not the first volume of verse written by Mr. McCurry. In 1907 was published *In Keswick Vale and other Lyrics*. Many of the poems in that volume were written in the forms of the Rondeau, the Rondel, the Triolet, the Sonnet ; and perhaps what distinguished Mr. McCurry's work was the union of simplicity of matter and diction with a certain elaborateness of metrical form. These went well together, for even the metrical effects seemed spontaneous and unlaboured.

Here again the writer shows his affection for the Rondeau, and he has given us an example of his skill in the Villanelle. In both the earlier and these later poems he proves his genuine love for the more amiable aspects of external nature, and sometimes a sense, not unaccompanied with enjoyment, of some of its harsher moods ; here, as in the former volume, he is inspired by a kindly and generous humanity, by a temper of sincere piety, and by an instinctive leaning towards things that are pure and of good report.

Pathos and something of humour were to be found in the earlier volume. But these have a

wider range in the present collection, and especially in the "Ballytumulty Ballads," in which the writer, following no model, makes a new departure in his work. The Ulster dialect, reported by Mr. McCurry, I have no doubt, with great fidelity, assists in his artistic effects. It gives the Ballads an impersonal and dramatic character. We are, I conjecture, amid Antrim scenes in the main, though whether Ballytumulty be discoverable on an Ordnance Survey map or be only a part of a poet's geography I am unable to say. The reader perhaps will be content with the assurance that there beside the "lough" her cousin and "boy" could "sit down an' cry" for the lost Agnes ; and perhaps it was there that Ned McGuffin in the almost boundless liberality of friendship found that he must draw the line at—pigs.

After proposing his moral in the latter of these Ballads, "Too Much of a Good Thing," Mr. McCurry in a few lines gives us a vivid picture of the frosty night when the two worthies, under the exhilarating influence of "tay and toast," are seen crossing Tam McKeever's meadow, and he artfully reserves the surprise and sudden turn of their "crack" for the concluding lines which ring down the curtain. So in "The Unruly Member," which we might name "The Ulster Taming of the Shrew"—and with another Kate

for the heroine—we are led up through a series of stanzas to the final triumph of the Ulster Petru-chio. It was again in Ballytumulty, not in Pornic, that Browning's girl of the gold hair had a near kinsman in Davy Long, who was a devotee of his Breton cousin's creed—

“ Gold in heaven, if you will;  
But I keep earth's, too, I hope.”

Spade-guineas serve for a test of character as well as double Louis d'ors, and if there was no priest in Ballytumulty to build an altar for his church, the coins went perhaps to as good a use in those “ten nice wee houses near the bridge.” Burns might have enjoyed the pawky humour of some of these ballads had they come from one of his Scottish contemporaries.

A favourite stanza of Burns is skilfully managed in “Andy Kyle's Awakening,” and some of the touches of nature, suddenly entering amid the pathos or humour of the ballad in the manner of their appearance reminds us of the great Scottish singer:—

The corncrake in the meadow near  
Recalled the days to memory dear,  
An' 'tween his notes the burn sang clear,  
An' seemed to say,  
'Tis bliss, 'tis bliss to carol here  
Both night and day.

Mr. McCurry, who is always sincere and unpretentious, might object to being named in connection with one of the world's supreme lyrists, and might say that he is not the nightingale but only the sparrow, "Rusty-coat"; yet, even if this were so, has he not himself declared that "Rusty-coat's" song should not be stilled? Many accesses of pleasure come to us from singers that fill the place assigned to them in the chorus of early summer.

The reader of this volume will have a narrow feeling for poetry if he fail to receive enjoyment from many of its pages. In the shorter pieces there is often a touch of sadness, such as earth and time must needs bring to us all; but there is also something of unfailing cheer, something of strength and sustainment, which comes to harmonise the spirit if for a moment it droops.

EDWARD DOWDEN.

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## *THE SMELL O' THE TURF*

*T*HE smell o' the turf,—how it gladdens and  
cheers

*My city-worn heart that has hungered for years  
For a sight of the fields from the head of the hill  
Where I listen again to the drone of the mill,  
And I gaze on the scene of my childhood with tears.*

*Even now when in manhood dejection and fears  
Oft shadow my pathway, and life's Autumn nears,  
How it acts like a spell amid sorrow and ill—  
The smell o' the turf.*

*How poor is the palace that royalty rears,  
How poor is the treasure of princes and peers;  
Give me, when the wind in the orchard is shrill,  
And the voice of the thrush in the gloaming is still  
The fragrant aroma the cottage endears—  
The smell o' the turf.*



# The Garden



## RUSTY-COAT

A GARDEN where the blackbird's song  
    Delights the waiting ear,  
What time the Spring with magic step  
    Returns the earth to cheer,  
Awaking all the fragrant buds  
    That slept through Winter drear.

A summerhouse whose trellised walls  
    The honeysuckle knows,  
Where through the leaves the morning sun  
    His waking splendour shows,  
Where sweet it is to read and rest  
    At tranquil evening's close.

These, not the least of all the joys  
    That crown our peaceful days,  
That kindle in our grateful hearts  
    The humble note of praise,  
And rouse afresh the rustic muse  
    To tune her artless lays.

It chanced one sabbath morn in May  
When through the quiet air  
The bells of Glenageary pealed  
To summon us to prayer,  
As round the verdant path we strayed  
To scent the fragrance there.

Before our gaze a cherry tree  
Stood robed in blossoms white,  
Stirred by a gentle wind it seemed  
A twinkling cloud of light,  
Such as the painters of Japan  
Have pictured for our sight.

There hiding 'mid the snowy blooms  
The birds were wont to sing,  
A mavis but an hour ago  
Had made the garden ring;  
When lo, there settled on the bough  
A bird of poorer wing.

A sparrow he, of vulgar birth,  
Through pride or envy drawn,  
Chirped, chirped in cheerless monotone;  
We shouted, "Hush, begone!"  
And in our spleen a pebble threw,  
But Rusty-coat sang on.

Then churchward as we went our way,  
This thought our bosom filled,  
Why should poor Rusty-coat be blamed?  
Why should his song be stilled?  
He did not choose his throat or coat,  
He's just what God has willed.

Can Philomel with rapturous note  
Before him claim the prize?  
When he with all his native art  
To laud his Maker tries,  
When God who made them minstrels both  
The choicer gift denies.

To us, to all the lesson comes  
Who feeble gifts deplore,  
And plead we cannot serve Him much  
So slender is our store,  
If like the birds we do our best  
God does not ask for more.

Nor let us fret if in the race,  
The race by God designed,  
Another runs at fleeter pace  
Through might of birth or mind,  
But seek for sympathy and grace  
To help the man behind.

VERONICA  
(*Altro-purpurea*)

VERONICA! to sing thy fame  
My rustic muse would humbly aim  
To me thy fragrant blooms are dear  
Beyond the fairest of the year;  
To me there's music in thy name.

## TO A MISSEL THRUSH

*(Villanelle)*

O MISSEL thrush, dost never tire  
Thy song on wintry winds to fling?  
Lone minstrel thou in Nature's quire.

I hear thee from my cottage fire,  
Thy wild notes make the orchard ring;  
O missel thrush, dost never tire?

Ere morn dispels the darkness dire,  
Thou call'st like some uncanny thing;  
Lone minstrel thou in Nature's quire.

The ploughman through the sleet and mire  
His team delays to hear thee sing:  
O missel thrush, dost never tire?

Art pressed with passionate desire  
To wake with song the sleeping Spring?  
Lone minstrel thou in Nature's quire.

More eloquent than poet's lyre  
That follows thee with broken string ;  
O missel thrush, dost never tire ?

Thou singest not for fame or hire,  
O'er brooding envy thou art king ;  
Lone minstrel thou in Nature's quire.

Sweet hope thy cheering notes inspire  
When shades of gloom around us cling,  
O missel thrush, dost never tire ?  
Lone minstrel thou in Nature's quire.

## THE CUCKOO

“OCH O, Och O!” like human wail  
It sounded o'er the darkening vale,  
As if some strange uncanny thing  
Had mingled with the songs of Spring  
The burden of its own sad tale.

Where art thou, mourner of the dale?  
Doth love or loss thy spirit ail?  
'Tis sad, in sooth, to hear thee sing  
“Och O, Och O!”

Ah, type thou art of mortals frail  
Who tremble when the lights grow pale,  
Discerning not their Lord and King,  
Who waits the balm of love to bring  
To all who cry, when creatures fail,  
“Och O, Och O!”

## THE SONG OF THE YELLOW-HAMMER

I HEARD the yellow-hammer's plaintive song,  
One April noon when Spring her jocund train  
Had called from silence back to song again,  
'Mid fragrant leaves to frolic all day long:  
But hermit-like he shunned the piping throng  
As if their pleasantry to him was pain,  
And he must flute a melancholy strain  
To tell the listening winds such joy was wrong.

What sorrow moved him that all-glorious day?  
His song was like a sigh, foreboding woe,  
As if he mourned for Summers passed away,  
And feared cold Autumn when the leaves would  
go:  
So like poor humankind, self-centred still,  
Dreaming of past delight or future ill.

## JAPANESE ANEMONE

NOW thro' the wailing Autumn wind  
That mourns for Summer left behind  
Comes fair October, silent maid,  
In scanty robe of russet shade ;  
One lonely robin flits around  
To glad her with his minstrelsy,  
One pale flower greets her from the ground—  
Sweet Japanese Anemone.

Thro' garnered fields she trips along,  
Where late was heard the reaper's song ;  
She brings a basket brimming o'er  
Of luscious fruit, a laughing store ;  
But all her fairest blooms are gone,  
From days of chill they had to flee,  
One hesitates and lingers on—  
Brave Japanese Anemone.

With withering leaves she loves to bind  
Her tresses from the western wind,  
And pairs of peeping acorns found  
'Mid trailing ivy on the ground;  
In rural paths she looks her best,  
An image beautiful to me,  
A posy cuddling in her breast  
Of Japanese Anemone.

See, shuddering thro' the shortened day  
Tall poplars calling her to stay,  
Oaks, wind-swept as she passes by,  
Salute her who are soon to die;  
But like the stately peaks that nod  
Above the Vale of Chamounix,  
And point the gazer to his God,  
Stands Japanese Anemone.

Hail, blest October! I with thee  
Should ever live contentedly,  
The loves of youth and middle age  
No longer should my heart engage;  
And fearless would my spirit sight  
The coming of the Enemy,  
As wintry winds do not affright  
Dear Japanese Anemone.

# The Summer House



## “LIFE’S LITTLE DAY”

“**L**IFE’S little day,” I hear thee sing  
In minor note of mournful ring,  
But what avails the grief we show  
That all too soon we graveward go,  
Why touch again the doleful string?

What if churl Time be on the wing,  
Fleet tho’ he flies he stoops to fling  
His favours: how they overflow  
“Life’s little day.”

Yet lightly were it wise to cling  
To all the sweets that time can bring,  
To seek occasion to bestow  
The love that we to others owe;  
For self-reproach at eve can sting  
“Life’s little day.”

## IT MIGHT BE WORSE

**I**T might be worse!—the present woe  
*Love* summons thee to undergo;  
Not joyous is the chastening rod,  
Nor, wielded by the Hand of God,  
Does He design to make it so.

Tho' in the cloud is set the bow,  
His purpose He may not foreshow;  
This path thy fellow saints have trod;  
It might be worse!

When “afterward” the wind sings low,  
And gloomy skies begin to glow,  
Above the present wintry sod  
The flow'rs of faith their blooms shall nod:  
Then trust Him now when tempests blow;  
It might be worse!

## “ WHILE WE HAVE TIME ”

“ WHILE we have time ” let nought prevent  
Our working out life’s good intent :  
Of slender worth are aims sublime  
To help the crippled ones to climb,  
If only thoughts, not deeds, are meant.

Life for a little while is lent,  
We reason when we should repent,  
For knowledge makes inaction crime  
“ While we have time.”

Were all our swollen wine-skins rent,  
Their precious store on others spent,  
The music in our hearts would chime  
More sweet than in our golden prime,  
And life give forth a fragrant scent  
“ While we have time.”

## WHY SHOULD WE GRIEVE?

WHY should we grieve, when all the way  
'Twas Love that led us day by day?  
If o'er our path the sorrow-cloud  
Oft lingered, 'twas by Love allowed  
To make us trust Him and obey.

If Holy Writ is wont to say  
No second causes, yea or nay,  
Exist for us, the heaven-endowed,  
Why should we grieve?

Enough our daily dues to pay,  
His care provideth, come what may:  
When envious of our neighbour, proud,  
Wealth-seeking like the worldly crowd,  
Love checks us lest we go astray—  
Why should we grieve?

# The Open Road



## GLENAGEARY

DO you know sweet Glenageary,  
As it hangs o'er Dublin Bay,  
At the head of Old Dunleary  
Where the Channel breezes play?  
By the foot of fair Killiney,  
Where we climb to scent the briny,  
And to watch the ships so tiny  
Far away.

There is gold in Glenageary  
When the voice of Spring we hear,  
And the blackbird whistles cheery  
To his mate a-sitting near;  
When the hawthorn buds are growing,  
And the balmy gales are blowing,  
Where the yachts their sails are showing  
Off the Pier.

O, the charm of Glenageary  
When 'tis Summer in the grove !  
And we hasten, hot and weary,  
To the pool at Sandycove :  
Or we linger by the fences,  
As the cool of day commences,  
While its beauty thrills the senses  
As we rove.

But to stray thro' Glenageary  
When October fills the air,  
And the fields are hushed and eery  
Is delight beyond compare ;  
When the Autumn woods are smiling,  
All our fond regret beguiling  
For the leaves around us piling  
Everywhere.

Ah, the lanes of Glenageary  
Are as welcome still to me,  
When the Winter sky is dreary,  
And the wind is blowing free ;  
There 'tis joy alone to ponder,  
Or with bosom friend to wander,  
When the lights are shining yonder  
O'er the sea.

## TO THE SUGAR LOAF, CO. WICKLOW

NOT when thy naked peak with splendour glows  
    In the pure stillness of a summer dawn,  
Not when the cloudy veil is overdrawn  
To screen thee from the glare that noonday knows  
Art thou most beautiful in thy repose:  
    But when the mist of sultry day is gone,  
    And silent eventide creeps slowly on,  
How exquisite and clear thy vision grows.

Then o'er the woods by fair Glencullen height  
Streams the soft glory of the setting sun,  
    And all thy changing green is touched with  
        gold;  
Like to some saint whose brow reflects the light  
    Of Paradise, ere days on earth are done,  
    Whom men are hushed in silence to behold.

## ON THE THREE ROCK MOUNTAIN

WIND, Rock, and Tree! O memory sweet  
That cheers me oft in crowded street,  
When sultry June is in the sky,  
And not a bird or flower is nigh  
To glad me thro' the noonday heat.

Where Mammon reigns, a king complete,  
And Fashion worships at his feet,  
I muse on you, to you I fly,  
Wind, Rock, and Tree!

Here with you now in cool retreat  
No more the city surges beat,  
On daisied turf at ease I lie,  
And list the lonely peewit's cry  
Who comes your welcome to repeat,  
Wind, Rock, and Tree!

## THE CROMLECH NEAR ENNISKERRY

**L**IIGHTLY we pass, or gaze in scornful mood

On this lone cairn where pagan bands of yore  
The treasured ashes of their chieftain bore  
For sepulture in earthen chamber rude;  
And reared these monoliths gigantic, crude,  
Which now for forty centuries or more,  
The blasts, the blighting hail of winter hoar  
From circling steeps have stubbornly withstood.

Yet in these stones, unlettered tho' they rest,  
Are sermons eloquent, if still unread,  
Telling of virtue in the savage breast  
That toiled to honour the lamented dead—  
Spark of celestial fire in love expressed,  
Ere light from Calvary to Iverna spread.

## AUTUMN AT ENNISKERRY

HARD by that leafy glen where all day long  
The Dargle river sings its heedless song,  
We wandered idly one October day  
Thro' golden woods slow sinking in decay.  
O'er the fair scene a tender veil was drawn  
That half obscured the cottage and the lawn,  
While the brave sun showed feebly thro' the haze,  
As if exhausted after Summer days.  
On Nature's brow pale care had come to rest  
Dispelling lightness from her lover's breast,  
But kindling thoughts too deep to be expressed.

How dear the memory of that happy hour,  
Not Time's rude hand can rob us of its power;  
Those hallowed reveries fondly we recall  
Of Death and Life, of Love surmounting all—  
The pride, the indigence of short-lived man,  
The selfish schemes that fill his earthly span;  
His endless toil the world's reward to win,  
Unmindful still where riches true begin;

The virtuous care his manhood should engage  
To share serenity in time of age,  
As fading leaves with deeper beauty glow,  
When winds are chill and Summer's sap is low.

The road ascending from the river side,  
We reached a cottage where the paths divide:  
Beneath the lime-trees tall embowered it lay,  
Completely mantled by a creeper grey,  
Whose leaves, slow changing in the Autumn sun,  
Seemed loath to recognise their day was done.  
Against the foliage in a cage confined  
A goldfinch warbled to the passing wind,  
As if it would outmatch in endless flow  
The song that echoed in the vale below;  
While in the porch half hidden by the shade  
All bashful stood a little rustic maid.  
Her eyes, her hair, the witchery of her face  
Proclaimed a daughter of the Celtic race,  
As yet unconscious of her native grace.

A little knoll above the cottage rose,  
Whence gleamed the valley where the Dargle flows,  
Where from the glen it issues loud and strong  
To wind its course the verdant meads among.  
Far o'er the landscape under cloudless skies  
The russet hues of Autumn met our eyes,

And where the Sugar Loaf his summit showed  
Along his slopes the purple heather glowed.  
How exquisite the sweep of hill and dale  
From Bray Head mountain to our Dargle vale,  
Where half concealed fair Enniskerry lay,  
Silent and drowsy on the sunniest day,  
And yonder pencilled on the neighbouring skies  
Stood the great "Scalp," a wonder to our eyes.

'Twas sweet 'mid rustling leaves to roam at will  
Thro' sylvan avenues now hushed and still,  
Where the lone mavis, scared our steps to hear,  
Sought refuge in some ivied coppice near,  
Where sudden o'er the boughs would nimbly leap  
The startled squirrel, pausing oft to peep,  
While overhead still came the eerie sound  
Of falling leaves slow, slow to kiss the ground.  
O'er stately trees the hand of Death had passed,  
And motionless they seemed to wait their last,  
Fair beeches tall with trunks of silver grey  
All whispering stood in groups of close array  
As if in sympathy, and each had power  
To cheer his comrade in his passing hour,  
To softly tell him in his time of pain  
Cold wintry winds their boughs should strip in vain,  
For smiling April with life-giving breath  
Ere long should wake them from their sleep of death.

How precious are the truths that Nature kind,  
Still to her lovers pensively inclined,  
From her full page with heavenly light aglow,  
Is wont in all her changing moods to show.  
But minds ambitions in the earthly race  
For things of fair report have little place.  
How to increase the hoard that fortune gave,  
Controls us from the cradle to the grave.  
Thus all in vain her message from our breast  
Can steal away the turmoil of unrest,  
Can soothe our strife, and charm the hours of gloom,  
Grown deeper as we near the certain tomb.

O that as years unseen their course extend,  
And whitening hairs proclaim my coming end,  
Some clearer vision of the Love divine  
That speaks in silent Nature may be mine.  
That I, from calculating care set free,  
Might closely trace His steps in earth and sea,  
His awe-inspiring Hand might recognise  
In moving orbs that light the distant skies  
And mark with self-rebuke how all fulfil  
In mute obedience their Creator's will:  
So might divorce the fears my breast frequent,  
Spurn fame and pride to be at last content,  
And prove to fellow travellers on the road  
How potent is a life close linked with God.

## ON THE BANKS OF THE BOYNE

**O**N the Banks of the Boyne in the sweet month  
of May,  
We strayed at our ease in the cool of the day,  
The light on the stream was beginning to wane,  
And soft thro' the valley the cuckoo's refrain  
Made deeper the hush in the solitude grey.

In contrast, we mused on a time passed away,  
When kings here assembled in battle array,  
And wet was the turf with the blood of the slain  
On the banks of the Boyne.

“O Erin!” we murmured, “thou innocent prey  
Of lovers inglorious who lead thee astray,  
How long in the dusk wilt thou linger in vain,  
Ignoring the Light that can mould thee again  
As peaceful and pure as the zephyrs that play  
On the banks of the Boyne?”

## AT AMBLESIDE

**A**T Ambleside what happy hours  
We spent despite the summer showers;  
How oft with Rotha for our guide  
We wandered as the daylight died,  
And drank the fragrance of the flowers.

On Wansfell Pike where cloudlet lowers,  
And height the senses overpowers,  
We sat mid summits circling wide  
At Ambleside.

But not the feast the eye devours  
Of light and shade on crags and towers,  
And not the purple wreaths that glide  
From Silver How on Grasmere's tide  
Could match our love amid the bowers  
At Ambleside.



# Pilgrimage



## COWPER'S GARDEN AT OLNEY

IN these loved shades where quietude and rest

To sweet reflection woo the pilgrim guest,

'Tis good at silent eventide to stray

'Mid relics of a time long passed away,

To view with lover's eye the classic bowers

Where saintly Cowper spent his tranquil hours,

Musing on Nature with poetic thrill—

Her fairest images discerning still.

O stranger coming from afar to gaze,

With reverence tread these truly hallowed

ways,

Mayhap his gentle spirit hovers near,

Haunting the paths in days of lifetime dear :

By kindly fancy urged again we trace

His slender frame, his meditative face,

As pausing mid his toil he stoops to find

The first brown leaf that flutters in the wind.

Still thro' the village street the children cry,  
The street familiar to his dreaming eye ;  
Still with returning Spring the buds appear,  
Fresh visitants to keep his memory dear ;  
Still in his garden fair the fragrant bloom  
Proclaims dominion o'er its native tomb :  
And faith declares our Poet too shall rise,  
To find his blest fruition in the skies.

## GRAY'S TOMB, STOKE POGES CHURCHYARD

LATE Autumn noon, lit by a sickly sun  
Whose pallid circle faintly gilds the trees  
That sigh disconsolate, while the fitful breeze  
Lays bare their drooping branches one by one.  
Silent we mourn that Summer days are done,  
Yet mid the gloom our spirit is at ease,  
For while the leaves are falling fast it sees  
The certitude of fairer life begun.

Mayhap this mood our gentle Poet knew,  
As musing oft beneath "that yew-tree's shade,"  
Touched by a sympathy divine, he drew  
The legend of the lives around him laid,  
Bringing to light their pathos deep and true  
In strains whose influence shall never fade.

## CARLYLE'S HOUSE, CHELSEA

**L**OCKED in the stillness of this narrow den,  
Self-consecrate to set the world aright,  
Nigh half a century he waged the fight  
Against the foibles of his fellow men;  
Toiling to purify the noxious fen  
Of pride and folly with a prophet's might:  
But while he vexed his spirit day and night,  
*Love's* better way came not within his ken.

Vain, vain the task by feeble man essayed,  
Blind to the mission of the Crucified,—  
His will by native reason held in thrall:  
He builds upon the shingle, unafraid,  
While Faith with vision clear discerns the tide,  
And cries with warning voice, “Thy house  
shall fall.”

MILTON'S COTTAGE, CHALFONT  
ST. GILES

SEE! 'tis the very portal black with age,  
The grimy threshold where the Poet's feet  
Were wont to pass, what time he sought retreat  
'Mid these sequestered scenes, untouched by rage  
Of pestilence that fiercely did engage  
Fair London Town. Still breathes the garden  
sweet  
Where with his staff he found his rustic seat  
To scent the rose, or build his lofty page.  
Can'st picture him! with massive brow, deep-lined,  
Whose seraph-muse the highest heaven attained,  
Outsoaring all the limits that confined  
Fancy aforetime—now from earth unchained,  
Singing to men who spurned him, poor and blind,  
His deathless song of Paradise Regained.

## EVENING IN GRASMERE CHURCHYARD \*

APPROACH, fond Pilgrim ! Meditate unseen  
Here in God's Acre. Mark the humble mound  
Where Wordsworth lies ! Dost grieve that thou  
hast found

The spot long dreamt of, unpretending, mean ?  
Is thy breast filled with disappointment keen  
He slumbers not with kindred race around,  
In dim cathedral shade, with marble crowned—  
The resting-place of poet, king, and queen ?

'Tis better so ! Fair Nature whom in youth  
And age he wooed unwearied comes to keep  
Long vigil by her lover's lowly grave,  
While Marg'ret, Michael, or some hapless Ruth  
May steal aside in solitude to weep,  
When darkness lies on Rotha's murmuring  
wave.

\* This and the two following sonnets have appeared in  
"In Keswick Vale."

## FEZ

IN shadow of a crumbling mosque he stands,  
An aged mendicant with want outworn,  
Eyes from their sunken sockets ruthless torn  
For crimes in lawless youth,—for so demands  
The cruel Moslem code. With trembling hands  
Outheld for aid he only lives to mourn,  
Till kindly Death beyond the earthly bourn  
Shall carry him at last, and loose his bands.  
To motley crowds that careless come and go  
He murmurs, “ Give me what belongs to  
God ”:  
That cry proclaims that debt that Christians  
owe  
His country where Mohammed’s legions trod,  
And with the sword their creed unholy spread,  
Robbing her children of the Living Bread.

## THE COLOSSEUM

O ITALY, gratuitous and vain  
The time-worn task, to chronicle once more  
The valour of thy doughty sons who bore  
The Roman Eagles far o'er land and main;  
Better the Bard in love for thee refrain.  
In sooth thy fairest page is sullied o'er  
By dark rehearsals, and the heart is sore  
With Cæsar's vices. Silence is a gain.

But long as white-winged Faith her throne shall find  
In human hearts, that nobler, nameless band  
Shall ne'er to cold oblivion be consigned  
Who courted suffering on th' Arena's sand,  
And showed a frowning world how heroes die  
Moved by a love that answers Love on high.

## IN THE CATACOMBS

“**V**ALERIA sleeps in peace”: no more we know  
    Of her whose sacred dust reposes here,  
But fond Imagination lingering near  
Rends the dark veil of ages long ago,  
And sees a slave, who drank the cup of woe  
    In Cæsar’s household, till serene and clear  
    The Gospel light dispelled her darkness drear,  
And bliss was born the world could ne’er bestow.

Here oft she stole, forgetful of her care,  
    When light along the Tiber shore grew dim,  
In these dark galleries to kneel in prayer,  
    To hear the Word, or chant the vesper hymn,  
And when by Cæsar’s sword she fell asleep,  
    One whom she loved crept here to watch and weep.

## ABOVE GRYON, RHONE VALLEY

ON dizzy heights we caught the distant chime  
Of noonday pealing in the vale below,  
And traced the winding Rhone's impetuous flow  
Where fought the mighty Romans in the prime.  
Thence upward speeding on our venturous climb  
We touched the region of eternal snow,  
And joyed for one brief spell the calm to know  
That reigns in Alpine solitudes sublime.

There hidden by a grove of ancient pines  
A church we spied with walls of homely build,  
Carved on its timbers stood the sacred lines—  
An echo of the solemn thoughts that filled  
Our hearts in that still hour of God's infinity—  
“*De cité permanente nous n'avons point ici.*”

## BEETHOVEN'S HOUSE, BONN

TURN not away, O friend, tho' glist'ning tear  
Proclaim thy tenderness while hushed we  
stray

Thro' these dim galleries whose walls display  
Fond relics of the master we revere.  
Those sweet sad melodies thro' lifetime dear,  
That well translate the grief that comes to prey  
Upon our spirits at the close of day  
In lonely places, have their meaning here.

How deep his suffering none may estimate,  
For like Beethoven none was ever tried;  
'Twas his the sweetest music to create,  
But power to list its sweetness was denied:  
Yet with a lion's heart he conquered fate,  
And men applauded while unseen he sighed.

## THE WARTBURG, EISENACH

*(Where Luther was confined)*

FOUR teeming centuries their flight have taken,  
Freighted with memories of battles won  
For love of Truth, since thou, her darling son,  
Pent in a gloomy cloister didst awaken,  
To find her by her faithless guards forsaken,  
Divorced from Liberty, defamed, undone ;  
And forth didst lead her, strong to leap and run  
No more by fear of man cast down, and shaken.

Here for an interval, when round thy barque  
The storm of persecution fiercely rose,  
A Patmos thou didst find, where tempests dark  
Served but to deepen thy secure repose ;  
And these grey battlements remain to mark  
God's power to shield thee from thy priestly foes.

## **Miscellaneous**



## TO PROFESSOR DOWDEN, LL.D.

*(Acrostic)*

“E STEEM” is not the word my verse demands,  
D aring to voice the feeling that expands  
W ithin my bosom, since the memoried hour  
A mid life’s cares I knew thy friendship’s power;  
R ecording Time has proved it oft to be,  
D own thro’ the kindly years a “sheltering tree.”

D id not thy Shakespeare scorn the useless might  
O f him who sought to paint the lily white?  
W hy should I beggar words to sound thy fame,  
D o not thy countrymen thy worth acclaim,  
E xtol thy muse, thy learning’s wide estate,  
N ay, even the gentleness that makes thee great?

TO DR. WHELDALE STANLEY,  
*On his leaving Glenageary for Baghdad.*

HOW soon the years their magic course have  
run,  
And thou, O friend, a youth but yesterday,  
Strong man art grown, impatient for the fray  
Where Moslem foes attack God's Holy One.  
Let men and angels stand and cry, "Well done,"  
When God's own warriors at His word, "Away,"  
Ne'er hesitate His order to obey,  
But march to win the Kingdom for His Son.  
O, let this thought breed courage in thy breast,  
Should'st thou, His witness in a land forlorn,  
Be prone to feel disheartened and depressed,  
That men reject thy Master's love with scorn:  
Hearts in the homeland make thy cause their own,  
And night and day uphold thee at the Throne.

TO A FRIEND, (R. C. MORGAN,)

*On his Eightieth Birthday.*

**T**O you, dear friend, whose locks attest  
    The time has come for well-won rest,  
To you whose actions seem to say  
    You came of age but yesterday  
This little off'ring is addressed.

In prose it better were expressed—  
The birthday wish that warms my breast,  
    The love that always loves to stray  
        To you, dear friend.

Ah, in your face there shines confessed  
The presence of that hidden Guest,  
    Whose Name we know, whose sunny sway  
        Transforms December into May,  
And of His bounty gives the best  
        To you, dear friend.

## IN MEMORIAM

SIR JAMES CREED MEREDITH, LL.D.

SOFT moans the wind around each hallowed tomb  
In this dark city of the silent dead,  
But, near, a missel thrush disturbs the gloom  
With cheering note by kindly Nature led.

In the dull east the sun with duteous grace,  
As not unconscious of the scene forlorn,  
Peeps thro' the clouds that hide his friendly face  
To light the lonely graves this winter morn.

But whence the mournful column that invades  
The winding path to yonder heap of clay?  
Ah, 'tis no idle pageant here parades  
To move our sympathy by mute display.

Drawn by the link that sweet affection knows  
They come, his brethren of the "mystic tie,"  
To shed the mindful tear that pity owes  
To one they loved, too early called to die.

To die ! Nay, better far the boon they reap,  
Who in their pilgrim years the Saviour trust ;  
And he we mourn has only sunk to sleep,  
Till the last trump shall wake him from the dust.

But who the measure of his worth may tell,  
His native zeal, untiring till the end,  
His life domestic, where he played full well  
The sacred rôle of husband, father, friend.

Scarce had his life attained its looked for length,  
The storied span of three score years and ten :  
Ah, woeful thought ! too prodigal of strength  
He toiled, the servant of his fellow men.

In vain shall grief her fair memorial rear,  
No gilded epitaph a good man needs ;  
To us remains a heritage more dear—  
The fragrant memory of noble deeds.

## THE PRISONER

WHERE sombre Liffey seaward rolls his tide,

High up on wall of tenement there hung  
A captive lark, that on the breezes flung  
His liquid notes, as if he scorned to hide  
His native talent—liberty denied.

He sang as if that moment he had sprung  
From dewy mead, and, jubilant o'er his young,  
Could not restrain his rapture if he tried.  
No slave to dull surroundings, nor deterred  
By absence of his mate, or field, or tree,  
The song, the enchanting song that Shelley  
heard

Outpoured he with the same impetuous glee:  
But thou, God's pensioner, with care-lined  
brow,  
'Art dumb thro' petty circumstance: sing thou!'

## A LAY OF LLANGOLLEN

O HAD we grace enough to prize  
The simple tale of hope or fear  
Breathed by the poor ones we despise  
In our unwilling ear,  
What thought and tenderness like flowers  
Would bloom in these dull hearts of ours,  
What sympathy like April showers  
Would come to bless and cheer!

In fair Llangollen's sunny vale  
There lived and laboured years ago  
A worthy couple, blithe and hale,  
Whom good it was to know:  
Beloved by all their neighbours round,  
They tilled their slender plot of ground,  
And in its yield sufficient found,  
To meet their wants below.

Content was theirs, content that springs  
From daily intercourse with heaven,  
What joy to humble hearts it brings—  
A joy that knows no leaven :  
Beyond the wealth of Plutus' mine,  
Or sparkling gem from Inca shrine  
Is sweet content, that grace divine,  
To mortals sometimes given.

But with the lapse of three decades  
Our sturdy yeoman feeble grew,  
Infirmity his heart invades,  
He did the toil of two :  
And prisoner now he must remain,  
No more to brave the wind and rain ;  
But tho' in body worn with pain,  
No grief his spirit knew.

The change his gentle partner bore,  
Reposing on the Arm unseen,  
She counted not her burden sore,  
While he remained serene :  
To meet the ebb of fortune's tide  
Her rose-crowned porch she opened wide,  
A home for strangers to provide  
Who sought their valley green.

A little bower of wood and glass,  
Roofed in from gales and wintry showers,  
In bright seclusion saw him pass  
    The solitary hours.  
Deep seated in his spacious chair,  
And wrapped from hostile draughts of air,  
He conned his book in stillness there  
    Amid the ferns and flowers.

Four weary years without reprieve,  
    An invalid with broken frame,  
He never pined from morn till eve  
    And talked with all who came.  
He watched the seasons come and go,  
The summer's sun, the winter's snow,  
The joys that Nature has to show  
    To those who love her name.

The waters of the winding Dee  
    Sang thro' the valley's fair expanse,  
And on their bosom he could see  
    The morning sunbeams dance;  
Lone grasses waving in the breeze,  
The changing colour of the trees,  
The blackbird singing at his ease,  
    All filled him with romance.

One wild March morn with hands of love  
She wheeled him to his wonted rest,  
And fearing time might lonely prove,  
Her wifely moan she pressed.  
He heard, and with a smile declared  
No mortal knew how well he fared,  
For Nature every day prepared  
Fresh charms before unguessed.

Around him lay a mine of wealth  
To make him rich, to make him wise,  
Which he in days of ruddy health  
Had ventured to despise.  
Now in the silence he explored  
The treasures by his threshold poured,  
With truth for meditation stored,  
Too deep for careless eyes.

But well the secret he had learned,  
By Nature's lovers seldom seen,  
Her power where suff'ring is concerned  
Can feebly intervene:  
Her fairest scenes can ne'er impart  
Full solace to the sinking heart,  
May salve, but cannot heal the smart  
Of disappointment keen.

'Tis only He Whose Hand designed  
The faultless lilies of the field  
Can meet the woes of humankind,  
And prove a sun and shield.  
His Voice in Nature is supreme,  
And well our hero caught Its theme ;  
So bliss, beyond the poet's dream  
Of beauty, was revealed.

Thus with that lowly form it fared  
Four winters bound in sickness' chain  
God's whisper all the while he heard  
'Above the call of pain ;  
And shadows on the hills in May  
Had something eloquent to say—  
Soon sorrow's cloud would pass away,  
And loss would end in gain.

So proved it one October eve,  
When leaves were trembling in the blast,  
With none at hand to make him grieve,  
The morning broke at last ;  
And Autumn winds around his bier  
Their voices raised in requiem clear,  
Wailing for one who held them dear,  
To cloudless regions passed.



# Ballads of Ballytumulty



## AGNES

O CH, sore is my heart for the day that is  
gone,  
For the day that I'll niver see more,  
When I lived a wee lad, an' knowed nothin'  
o' bad  
In the moss jist beside the Lough shore,  
Ay, ay!  
Near oul' Ballytumulty shore.

Do you listen that win' thro' the crack in the  
doer,  
An' the sugh<sup>1</sup> in the beeches out by<sup>2</sup>?  
Well, you'd har'ly believe how the soun' makes  
me grieve:  
In throth I cud sit down an' cry,  
I cud—  
Sit down on a creepy<sup>3</sup> an' cry.

<sup>1</sup> a rushing sound.

<sup>2</sup> out by]outside.

<sup>3</sup> stool.

For the voice of wee Agnes, I hear it that plain,  
 Wee Agnes, light hearted an' free,  
 I mind she come here in the spring o' the year  
 When she wuzn't the height o' your knee,  
 Yis, yis!  
 No more nor the height o' your knee.

An' I wuz her cousin, and I wuz her "boy,"  
 Och, the notions that childhre will take,  
 We wor like as two pays, I wuz proud as ye plase,  
 An' I said I wud die for her sake,  
 Ay, ay!  
 Wud die for her darlin' wee sake.

Well, you know what come nixt: when a lump of  
 a boy,  
 I be to head out like the rest,  
 My fortune to thry, so I bid her good-bye,  
 An' I sailed for the land o' the west;  
 Man, O man,  
 But my heart it wuz sorely disthressed!

Well, Agnes growed up till the age of nineteen  
 An' I'm toul' wuz a picture to see,  
 The neighbours allowed,<sup>1</sup> not a girl in the crowd  
 Wuz as sonsie<sup>2</sup> an' cliver as she,  
 Sorra one!  
 An' she sung like a bird in the three.

<sup>1</sup> declared.    <sup>2</sup> winsome.

An' sweethearts in plenty come "spakin'" at night,  
 All hopin' in vain for her han',  
 Till one nice-behaved, with a good penny<sup>1</sup> saved,  
 An' two hundred fine acres o' lan',  
 Won the day;  
 An' the weemen declared it wuz gran'.

He wuz Brown from the river near Derrymagee,  
 A likely young fellah an' tall;  
 So they made no delay in settin' the day  
 An' the hour for the weddin' an' all,  
 Dear ay!  
 But you niver know what'll befall.

The night jist before, it wuz stormy an' wil'  
 An' the house, it wuz shakin' like mad;  
 You'd a' thought ivery blast wud be surely the last  
 The win' it wuz blowin' that bad,  
 It wuz:  
 None minded<sup>2</sup> it iver so bad.

An' Agnes wuz sleepin' her lone<sup>3</sup> with her aunt,  
 But, alas! in the midst o' their dhrames  
 On a suddint they woke nearly smothered wi'  
 smoke,  
 For behold you, the house wuz in flames —  
 Jist think!  
 They in bed, an' surrounded wi' flames.

<sup>1</sup> good penny]fair amount.    <sup>2</sup> remembered.    <sup>3</sup> her lone]alone.



It wuz this broke her heart, as ye'll aisy suppose,  
 Sure the pain of her burns she cud bear,  
 But his stiffness an' pride, his affection denied,  
 Dhriv' her min' to the brink o' despair,  
 Och anee!  
 What she suffered no tongue cud declare.

But she grew brave an' well in the days o' the  
 spring;  
 So a lovely wee cottage they foun'  
 Far away in the wud when the trees were in  
 bud,  
 An' the daisies wor jist above groun',  
 Yis, yis!  
 With the birds to sing welcome all roun'.

## II.

Ten years passed away, ten long lonesome  
 years,  
 An' I be to come home from abroad,  
 I wuz hearty an' sthrong, but I always thought  
 long<sup>1</sup>  
 For oul' Ballytumulty sod—  
 Och, och!  
 For the frien's an' a sight o' the sod.

<sup>1</sup> thought-long]felt homesick.

When we met she wuz shy that her beauty wuz  
gone,

Tho' she still wuz as lovely to me,  
I'd 'a' made her at aise for the rest of her days—

I wuz brave an' well-aff she cud see;

I wuz, heth<sup>1</sup>:

All the same, she wud niver agree.

But I deemed that her heart wuz in pain for the  
man

Whose wife she had niver become,  
It's always the way with the weemen, they say,  
Or at laste it's the manner o' some,

Jist think,

How tarble the notion o' some!

Her sorra had made her that kin'ly an' good,  
She niver wud murmur nor fret;

Ay quate an' resigned, an' religious inclined,  
Her saftness you'd niver forgot;

It's thtrue!

Sweet crayther as iver you met.

Not far from her home in the heart o' the wud,

There's a glade where the river runs deep,  
There whiles she wud sthray in the cool o' the day,

When the birds wud be goin' asleep;

Yis, yis!

An' the shadows beginnin' to creep.

<sup>1</sup> truly.

There, curious to mention, one ev'nin' in May,  
A bonnie wee fellah of three  
She happened to spy, with his nurse sittin' by ;  
It wuz Brown's chil' of Derrymagee !  
D'ye mind ?  
He lived up the river, ye see.

Well, the love an' affection that slept in her heart  
Awoke all at wanst for the wane ;  
His name it wuz Dick, an' they got very thick,  
For she met him there time an' again,  
She did *that* !  
They sported there time an' again.

Now listen, 'twuz late in September one day  
When the bulk o' the harvest wuz down,  
The day you must know, twice six years ago,  
That wuz set for her weddin' wi' Brown,  
Och, och !  
The weddin' that niver come roun'.

That day always foun' her at home an' at prayer,  
A day to be thoughtful an' sigh,  
But curious on this, somethin' quare wuz amiss,  
She felt it, she cudn't tell why.  
It wuz sstrange—  
Her notion that throuble wuz nigh.



Far an' near on the morn she wuz buried they come,  
In the graveyard her headstone appears,  
Where they laid her at rest, in her weddin' things  
    dhressed,  
The gown she wuz keepin' for years.

Do you listen that win' thro' the crack in the door,  
An' the sugh in the beeches out by?  
Well, you'd har'ly believe how the soun' makes  
me grieve,  
In throth, I cud sit down an' cry,  
I cud!  
Sit down on a creepy an' cry.

## ANDY KYLE'S AWAKENING

I T'S sixty year since Andy Kyle  
First saw the light in Glenamoyle;  
I mind him when I was a chil',  
Canty an' gay,  
His crack<sup>1</sup> an' capers make me smile  
Even the day.

We played togither, him an' me,  
An' speeled<sup>2</sup> my uncle's apple tree,  
Mitchin' from school till after three,  
On sport engaged,  
Like larks that fin' their liberty,  
Once caught an' caged.

When care come on us all too soon,  
'Twas Andy kep' our hearts in tune,  
Like sunshine in the month o' June  
He made us bright,  
His face shone like the risin' moon  
On harvest night.

<sup>1</sup> conversation.    <sup>2</sup> climbed.

Andy was at it late an' early,  
A holiday he tuk but rarely,  
An' very quick he prospered quarely,  
As guess you may,  
His customers he thrated fairly,  
Which made things pay.

But what's not quite the rule the day  
Throughout the North, so people say,  
The more he got he give away,  
My story credit,  
He kep' it not with lock an' key  
Because he made it.

1 gie an'Jvery.

In politics at whiles he mixed,  
An' sore "the other side" he vexed;  
A magistrate they made him nixt,  
Nor stopped he there,  
Till, in the Corporation fixed,  
They made him Mayor.

Och, cruel death, it's hard to bear ye!  
To what distress can man compare ye?  
They're mad that say they 'most prefer ye  
    To want an' woe,  
But when ye come they'd gladly spare ye,  
    Aye loath to go.

Poor Andy's married bliss was brief,  
No wane was his to share his grief,  
When rich men sigh the world is deaf,  
An' little bothers;  
But Andy's sorra found relief  
In helpin' others.

III.

He knew her as her father's friend  
They lived as neighbours in the glen,  
An' sweet to him she seemed as then  
As blithe an' sonsie,<sup>1</sup>  
A stranger to the wiles of men  
Was simple Nancy.

Ay, good she was beyond compare,  
With dimpled cheek an' dusky hair,  
Grown up as innocent an' fair  
As Nature found her,  
Fresh as the fragrant country air  
That whistled round her.

To mark with joy his weddin' day,  
The debts that on the parish lay,  
My noble Andy be to pay  
With generous han',  
An' sick an' poor had cause to pray  
For sich a man.

1 winsome.

But weak are words to paint as due  
The change that humble Nancy knew,  
For Andy's wealth an' greatness grew  
                    Beyond her fancy,  
The house, the hall, the staircase too,  
                    They staggered Nancy.

She nearly fainted to explore  
The rooms with all their gilded store,  
To meet the maids, in number more  
                    Than Andy wanted,  
To mark the saucy look they bore,  
                    The airs they vaunted.

But blest was Nancy's fortune when  
The housekeeper she made her frien'  
Who gave her lessons now an' then  
                    On how to plase,  
And larnt her things beyont her ken  
                    Of gentry's ways.

And sich was Nancy's native grace,  
With artless tact she tuk her place,  
And beat them holla in the race  
                    That went afore her,  
The sweetness of her homely face  
                    Made all adore her.

O maidens, would ye larn the laws  
To win the worthy man's applause?  
'Tis not the handsome cheek that draws  
    You'll often find;  
In virtue's face we see the flaws,  
    But never mind.

'Twas so with Nancy; people sought her  
To catch the charm that Nature taught her,  
That made her every place they brought her  
    A fair attraction,  
While honest Andy simply thought her  
    Jist near perfection!

### III.

But Nancy aye thought long for someone,  
Some decent country girl or woman  
Reared like herself, with thoughts in common,  
    Her days to share,  
And talk of something else but Mammon,  
    An' what to wear.

She wearied of the fuss an' bustle  
In scenes where silks an' satins rustle,  
Where worldly folk their fellows hustle,  
    Both frien' an' foe,  
Untiring in the common tussle  
    To make a show.

O happy life in sylvan shades,  
 Where gilded pomp no more invades,  
 Nor love of gold the mind degrades,  
 Nor sordid notion ;  
 Where gentle Nature sweetly aids  
 The heart's devotion.

How oft in dreams of night a-bed  
 To Glenamoyle again she fled,  
 Wheré bud an' bloom around her shed  
 Their perfume sweet,  
 An' every tree inclined its head  
 Her steps to greet.

Her rosied cot again she knew,  
 The hillock near where bracken grew,  
 There oft she climbed to get the view  
 Or read her lone,<sup>1</sup>  
 Till evenin' shadows brought the dew  
 An' daili'goin'.<sup>2</sup>

The corncrake in the meadow near  
 Recalled the days to memory dear,  
 An' 'tween his notes the burn sang clear,  
 An' seemed to say  
 'Tis bliss, 'tis bliss to carol here  
 Both night an' day.

<sup>1</sup> her lone]alone.      twilight (*lit*, daylight going).

Ah, discontent is hard to move  
When mortals fail to look above,  
An' hearts uncomf'ered by love  
Are racked with fear  
That inattention seems to prove  
They grow less dear.

But civic functions here an' there,  
The loads the great are called to bear  
Left Andy little time to spare  
For home an' rest,  
So loneliness an' then despair  
Filled Nancy's breast.

IV.

At length too faint to lift her head,  
Wan prisoner in her stately bed  
She lay, an' doctors spoke with dread  
                          Of "swift consumption,"  
While Andy mourned with shame inbred  
                          His want of gumption.

For love was niver absent truly,  
His good wee wife he cherished duly ;  
If, in her eyes, he acted coolly  
                          He didn't mean it ;  
Says he, "The sun's aye blazin' fully,  
                          Tho' clouds may screen it."

Ah, centred in our own affairs,  
We lightly think of others' cares,  
Then claim that nought our love impairs,  
                          Or can remove :  
'Tis want of sympathy that wears  
                          The hearts we love.

But wounded by the sudden stroke,  
The love in Andy's breast awoke,  
An' soon he vowed to break the yoke  
                          He laboured under,  
Let all the city magnates croak,  
                          Or stand an' wonder.

One ray of hope the doctors gave  
To wrest her from the silent grave—  
The murky town she be to lave  
Without ado,  
Perchance her native air might save,  
An' pull her thro'.

As careless as the Autumn wind  
For scenes of wreck it leaves behind,  
See Andy go, his all resigned  
For Nancy's sake,  
While people swear he's lost his mind,  
Sich fuss to make.

'Away, away without regret  
For honours won or still to get,  
If God will spare dear Nancy yet,  
He'll ask no more,  
Too long the fever an' the fret  
For nought he bore.

How good of God to let us see  
What humble men we ought to be,  
And thro' affliction sets us free  
From cords that bind—  
His aim to grant in some degree  
The saintly mind.

O, envy not the golden tide  
Of others' wealth to thee denied;  
Thou canst not know how sorely tried  
                The rich may be,  
Thou, too, art dear; let Love decide  
                What's best for thee.

## V.

Now with the lapse of winters twain,  
Our hero we behold again;  
The change of air was not in vain,  
                For well an' strong  
Is Nancy now, despite the pain  
                She suffered long.

A mansion by the river's side,  
With ample roof and gable wide,  
Which mighty oaks stand round to hide  
                In wintry weather—  
The paradise for which she sighed—  
                They share together.

A garden for the sultry day  
Where infant winds delight to play;  
A summer house 'mid hanging spray,  
                For calm seclusion,  
Where climbing rosebuds lose their way  
                In sweet profusion.

A sound of music in the air  
Aye greets the list'ner dreaming there,  
When Spring conceals with foliage fair  
    The piping crowd,  
Or Winter sings 'mid branches bare  
    His anthem loud.

The river's song to Andy's heart  
More thought celestial can impart,  
Than when in love with German art  
    He went a-rovin',  
And paid his tribute to Mozart,  
    Bach or Beethoven.

Intent on antiquarian joys,  
His cultured leisure he employs,  
Prints, curios from foreign skies  
    With care he keeps,  
And dainty shelves of Indian toys  
    In jostlin' heaps.

His income he delights to pour  
Where want or sickness aid implore,  
Six hundred pounds a year or more,  
    The needful sum,  
He spends to keep an open door  
    For all who come.

His native vale around him shining,  
Fair Nature light an' shade entwining,  
In bosom of green hills reclining,  
By Antrim shore;  
Blue sea the distant landscape lining,—  
What would he more?

Yet Nature brimful of attraction  
Can ne'er create the sweet reflection  
That gentle Nancy's word and action  
In Andy breed,  
Provoking still his deep affection  
In thought an' deed.

In truth, a student of the science,  
She knows the power of sweet compliance,  
And scorns to move in soft defiance  
Of Andy's will;  
Thus, thus they live in fond alliance  
As lovers still.

## DAVY LONG

DRAW in your creepies<sup>1</sup> to the hate,  
An' thrim that smoky lamp,  
Put on another sod o' turf,  
The night is coul' an' damp.

Am fearin' there's more rain afut,  
Jist listen to the blast;  
My stars! but Tammy's long in town,  
Wheesht—there's the cart at last!

You, Sally, give the pot a stir,  
Them porridge should be done;  
I'll send you to your hammock, wanes,<sup>2</sup>  
And that'll stop your fun.

You promised us a story, but—  
You did, before we go,  
About that funny beggarman  
Who lived here long ago.

<sup>1</sup> stools.      <sup>2</sup> children.

'Ay, ay, oul' Davy Long you mane,  
 The kin'ly mother cried,  
 I wuz a wee thing like yerselves,  
 The night the crayther died.

Beyont the Whinney Hill we lived,  
 Not far from Uncle Joe's;  
 Och, och, a windy spot it wuz,  
 As all the countrhy knows.

An' now an' then to pass the night  
 Would come poor Davy Long,  
 My father liked his hearty crack,<sup>1</sup>  
 The childher liked his song.

"Long Davy" wuz the name he got,  
 Six fut he wuz an' more,  
 An' ivery weddin', ivery wake,  
 Saw Davy to the fore.

He'd sit an' kaly<sup>2</sup> by the hour  
 When supper wuz in view,  
 An' nothin' happened roun' the glens  
 But nāky<sup>3</sup> Davy knew:—

<sup>1</sup> conversation.      <sup>2</sup> gossip.      <sup>3</sup> shrewd.

The party at M'Clinton's barn,  
 The price o' Tamson's whate,  
 The row among the Vestry men  
 About the rector's gate.

An' Davy wuz that cliver too,  
 The weeds all growin' wil'  
 Their use for poultices he knew  
 To docthor cow, or chil'.

His cheek had aye the bit o' red  
 That done you good to see;  
 An' when you asked, "How are you mun?"  
 He'd say, "I'm rightilee."<sup>1</sup>

But feth an' seng<sup>2</sup> the day come roun',  
 When Davy, like the rest,  
 Grew wake about the joints, an' that,  
 An' wheezy in the chest.

His remedies in vain he tried,  
 Herbs niver known to fail;  
 The neighbours said, "Try Dr. Goold,  
 He'll cure you, we'll go bail."

<sup>1</sup> pretty well.      <sup>2</sup> feth an' seng]without doubt.

“ Say how you feel,” the docthor cried,  
 He answered like a man!  
 “ *I feel as if you tuk my heart,*  
*An' squeezed it in your han'.*”

The docthor smiled, an' thried his best,  
 Did all a docthor could,  
 But Davy went from bad to worse,  
 In short, he done no good.

I mind him peghin’<sup>1</sup> up the hill  
 One evenin’ white as death,  
 An’ every wheen o’<sup>2</sup> steps he tuk  
 He stopped to get his breath.

’Twuz comin’ on till Chrissimis,  
 The snow wuz on the groun’,  
 He stud a minute at the gate,  
 An’ gazed an’ gazed aroun’.

He seemed to murmur to the trees,  
 “ Och, och, my day is done”;  
 I saw the tear-dhrop on his cheek  
 And felt his end begun.

<sup>1</sup> breathing hard.    <sup>2</sup> wheen o’few.

We put the crayther till his bed,  
And brought the docthor too;  
But spite of all the care he got,  
Poor Davy waker grew.

One thing about him all the time  
We failed to undherstan'—  
He be to get his staff in bed,  
An' houl' it in his han'.

He niver yit let go his grip,  
It vexed my mother sore,  
An' when she kneeled to pray for him,  
His staff he hugged the more.

She read a chapther at the place  
That tells us God is love,  
And begged him as he neared his end  
To think o' Them above.

He wagged<sup>1</sup> my father to the bed  
His last request to hear;  
Siz he, "Ye see this quare oul' staff,  
I've had it fifty year."

<sup>1</sup> beckoned.

“ O'er dale an' hill it helped me still,  
 A comrade throue an' thried;  
 Before you screw the coffin down,  
 Jist lave it at my side.”

My father give his word: no more  
 He'd answer right or wrong;  
 And ere the sun wuz in the sky,  
 A corp wuz Davy Long.

To bury him the neighbours come,  
 All on a Chrissimis Eve,  
 But no relation, chick or chil',  
 He left behin' to grieve.

With that,<sup>1</sup> to make his promise good,  
 My father brought the staff,  
 But ere he lay it with the corp,  
 He found the head come aff!

He give a start, he cried aloud  
 “ What's this, what's this I see?  
 The staff is holla, filled with coin,  
 As full as full can be!”

<sup>1</sup> with that]thereupon.

Amazed, the neighbours gathered roun'  
No longer cud they doubt,  
As on the table in the room  
He shook the guineas out.

Spade guineas, black with age and dust,  
They reckoned ninety-four,  
An' after them there jingled down  
Three hundred sovereigns more.

They buried Davy an' his staff,  
They kept the promise true,  
An' then they had long commonin'<sup>1</sup>  
Of what wuz best to do.

In Ballytumulty they built  
Ten houses for the poor,  
Ten nice wee houses near the bridge  
With gardens at the doer.

Lord, save us all from Davy's sin,  
From Davy's love of pelf,  
But can I blame the crayther much?  
I feel as bad myself!

<sup>1</sup> discussion.

## TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING

HOW oft some fair excuse we frame  
Our good resolve to rid of blame,  
When conscience makes our duty clear,  
And prompts the gift to misery dear ;  
But calculating thoughts begin,  
And blunt fair impulse born within,  
And while we pity, we declare  
Our need has left us nought to spare.  
If blest with riches like the few  
What noble actions we should do !  
But circumstances and the hour  
Deprive us of the longed for power.  
Alas ! that lack of wealth should prove  
Our plea to cover lack of love,  
Should cause occasion for the boast  
'Tis aye the poor who give the most.

'Twas night ; the moon was in the sky,  
And not a fleecy cloud was nigh.  
It had been snowin' aff an' on,  
But now the heavy clouds were gone,

Banked up all dimly in the west  
Where one star, brighter than the rest,  
Had gone to keep them company  
Far out across the lonely sea.  
The others glinted<sup>1</sup> out an' in,  
As if they strove a prize to win,  
An' took advantage of the frost  
To gain the time in darkness lost.  
The win' was now shut up an' quate,  
As if it knew the hour was late,  
An' row an' riot must forego  
Amid the silence of the snow.  
So not a whisper, not a soun'  
Come from the sleepin' trees aroun';  
When on a suddint from the shedda  
There crossed oul' Tam M'Keever's medda  
Two sturdy chielis,<sup>2</sup> with voices strong,  
Who kailied<sup>3</sup> as they tramped along.

The one was Willy M'Adoo,  
A drouthy<sup>4</sup> boy as neighbours knew,  
An' Ned M'Guffin was the other,  
Who often give the Peelers<sup>5</sup> bother;  
But not on mischief did they roam  
So late at night an' far from home.  
In short, the party had been long,

<sup>1</sup> glanced.    <sup>2</sup> young fellows.    <sup>3</sup> gossiped.

<sup>4</sup> thirsty.    <sup>5</sup> police.

The crack<sup>1</sup> was loud, and loud the song,  
 While all too kind had been the host,  
 An' rather strong the "tay an' toast";  
 So now each felt his duty clear,  
 His wayward brother home to steer.  
 Not once or twice that frosty night  
 The home of each had shone in sight,  
 But neither would at home remain  
 An' lave his friend his lone<sup>2</sup> again.  
 Said each: "I'll see you back a piece,  
 For fear you'd meet some shtray police."  
 Thus half the night had lumbered thro'  
 Before they bid the last adieu.

Och, words are useless to declare  
 The love between this lovely pair  
 At seasons when the "tay an' toast"  
 Had loosed their tongues their love to boast.  
 To-night beneath yon starin' moon  
 The partin' time come aye too soon,  
 An' foun' them locked in long embraces,  
 Not half an inch between their faces.  
 "I'll tell you what it is," said Willy,  
 "(Don't think me daft or even silly)  
 I like you so, you cudn't vex me,  
 I'd give you anythin' you'd ax me."

<sup>1</sup> conversation.<sup>2</sup> his lone]alone.

“An’ as for me,” said Ned M‘Guffin,  
“There’s them that calls me ‘dhrinkin’ ruffin,’  
But you know better, an’ it’s threue,  
Am raley jist as fond of you.”

“But wud you, Ned, as dacent be,  
An’ show yourself as kin’ to me?  
*I’d* give *you* anythin’ you’d name,  
Wud *you*, my jewel, do the same?  
For instance, if you had two sheep,  
Now, wud you give me one to keep?”

“I wud,” said Ned, “without a doubt,  
Nothin’ you’d ask wud put me out.”

“An’ if you had two cows as well?”

“I’d give you one to milk or sell.”

“An’ if you had two donkeys too?”

“One should be yours, I tell you threue.”

“An’ if two turkeys fit to roast?”

“I’d give the one you liked the most.”

“An’ if two pigs?” next Willy cried.

“Och, wait,” said Ned, “be satisfied.  
*I have* two pigs, a lovely pair,  
Their match you’d not find anywhere;  
To part with one I’m rather loath,  
For, man alive, I want them both!”

## THE UNRULY MEMBER

I WUDN'T for the world let on<sup>1</sup>  
The place it happened or the date,  
I'll only say his name was John,  
An' hers was Kate.

So, ladies, don't unaisy be,  
Let me assure you in a word,  
Not here in Ballytumulty  
The thing occurred.

In this dear glen the weemen kin',  
Whether of high degree or low,  
To husbands' faults are always blin',  
Or nearly so!

Here only harmony an' bliss  
In each domestic circle reign,  
Altho' it's hard to count on this,  
When men complain—

<sup>1</sup> let on]confess.

Men with their quare, unsartin ways,  
You're niver sure to have them long,  
Let weemen try their best to plase,  
There's somethin' wrong!

Well, let me tell of gentle Kate,  
Her countless merits should be sung,  
But, och, it pains me to relate  
She had a tongue!

With it to manage John she'd try,  
Would nobly press her good advice,  
But he, ungrateful, would reply,  
Nor take it nice.

At other times to wield her power,  
This better plan her love preferred,  
She'd hear him talk to her an hour,  
Nor speak a word.

Now tho' it tried his patience sore  
To hear her eloquence let loose,  
Her silent way he dreaded more  
Than her abuse.

It fell upon a winter eve  
When John, since mornin' in the mire,  
Was glad his horse and plough to leave  
For kitchen fire.

But when he reached it, cold an' wet,  
His worthy partner never stirred,  
An' all his kindly greetin' met  
Without a word.

Something had happened ! that was sure ;  
In vain its nature John divined,  
But very soon her sulks to cure  
This plan designed.

The nooks an' corners of the room  
He started fiercely to explore,  
An' all the time a look of gloom  
His visage bore.

The plates that stood in shinin' rows  
He searched behind them all in turn,  
The pockets of his Sunday clo'es,  
The empty churn.

The settle-bed he opened out,  
It seemed to him a likely spot,  
The quilt an' sheets he flung about,  
But found "it" not.

He looked in every bowl an' mug,  
Behind the clock where cobwebs cling,  
He tried the cracked oul' China jug  
That held the string.

Now Kate was meanwhile sittin' by,  
Pretendin' not the least regard,  
But with the corner of her eye  
She watched him hard.

This dhreadful man was sore to bide,  
She felt, in throth, quite overcome,  
But, och, her temper and her pride  
Long held her dumb.

'At last the boilin' point was reached,  
No longer silent could she be,  
She started from her chair and screeched  
In lively key.

“John, John, you doited<sup>1</sup> crayther, stop!  
What in the world has gone asthray?  
This blessed night I’m fit to dhrop,  
What is it, pray?”

“ ‘Tis found,” he cried, and danced about;  
“I knew I’d find it soon or late.”  
“Found what?” she asked him, with a shout,  
“Your tongue, good Kate!”

<sup>1</sup> demented.

# Betty of the Glens



## INTRODUCTORY

IN vain the Muse shall prompt some ancient theme,

Dear to the soul of leisure-loving dames,  
Of love and valour linked in high romance  
That sings the hapless fate of maiden fair  
Who mourns her absent lover's slow return  
In frowning turret by the moaning tide,  
With nought to break the dread monotony  
That fills the compass of her dreary day;  
Save when thro' casement, opening to the beach,  
She, lingering, eyes the hoary-crested waves  
In foaming parallels assail the rocks,  
Or burst in thunder on the lonely strand.  
There, must she languish at her father's will,  
'Till from the vow her faithful knight imposed  
She breaks obedient, scattering to the winds  
The living embers of undying love  
To wed some present and persistent lord.

Chord more familiar to our homely muse  
That sings th' unheeded sorrows of the poor  
Our verse demands: nor shall the stilted phrase

Nor windy metaphor the tongue engage  
Chanting this legend of the rural North.

---

Near Ballytumulty there used to stand,  
Deep in the gloom of giant sally trees  
That swung their boughs across the muddy lane,  
A strange, unlovely cot, whose walls, once white,  
Had gained thro' years a brown sepulchral shade.  
The broken panes with rags were rudely filled,  
And the worn thatch, in keeping with the whole,  
Showed to the rain the peeping rafter bare.  
Long had Spring flow'rs disdained to shed their  
grace

In that wild garden of luxuriant weeds;  
But round the base of th' unsightly walls  
Ran maze of multitudinous marigold,  
While thro' a shattered frame devoid of glass  
The tall nasturtiums each returning year  
Dispensed their lavish wealth of varied blooms,  
As if to show the habitants within  
Nature still lived the wreck to beautify.

This was the home, if home it might be named,  
So sadly kept, so seldom occupied,  
Of Betty Lee, a roving tinker's wife,  
Who with her "man" and little wan-faced  
wean  
Would here resort in idle intervals,

That followed absence at some distant fair;  
Here jovial neighbours of the drouthy<sup>1</sup> kind  
Would love to gossip round the steaming  
bowl;  
But when the fragrant brew its strength revealed,  
Would taste in full the might of Betty's wrath,  
And the dread swiftness of her freckled fist.  
Her reputation thro' the glens around  
For self-control and virtues near allied  
That make the total sum of wifely charm  
Was not the value of a penny piece.  
"The Targer" was the loveless name she bore.  
But while no villager, to whom the pair  
Was sight familiar, could in sooth extol  
The flickering virtues of her hapless mate,  
Still warm and deep amongst the rural folk  
The sympathetic tide of feeling ran;  
And him they pitied, grieving for the luck  
That made the "harmless crayther" Betty's  
man.  
From her he learned in years now passed away  
The habit, fatal to domestic peace,  
Of self-indulgence. Oft its power he proved  
To make him for the time his care forget;  
But when the crop of woes showed plentiful,  
He drained his cup with zeal continuous,  
And with her sank more deeply in the mire.

<sup>1</sup> thirsty.

No casual eye that looked on Betty once  
Could soon dismiss her image from his mind ;  
It was a face that children dream about  
And screaming call for mother in the dark.  
Not seldom on a winter afternoon  
We've seen her stand, or reel across the court  
That meets the market-square, deserted then  
By farmer's cart and pedlar's noisy booth ;  
And when the rain or early gathering night  
Indoors had sent e'en vagrants loitering yet,  
Some visionary foe would Betty hail,  
Or mayhap juvenile in outpost safe,  
And furiously would swing her brawny arms,  
Up to her shoulders bared, and hoarsely roar  
For man or woman who had nerve enough  
To try their mettle in impromptu fight.  
It was a scene to touch the callous heart  
With pity, when from broken hairpin loosed,  
Her tresses foul had trailed their tawny length  
In tangled knots across her grimy cheek,  
And partly screened her bright repulsive eye,  
Whose squinting glare the maddened brain  
revealed ;  
While from frothing purple lips would pour  
Th' unbridled flood of imprecation foul.  
But sadder still, her' puny little one  
In ragged guise, now on the humid ground,  
Beating impatient feet and crying without pause,

“O, mammy, O my mammy”; raised anon  
In kindly arms of stranger standing near,  
Whose pleading words “The Targer” heeded not.  
Tho’ Betty loved her solitary babe  
After the manner of her tigress heart,  
And in her sober spells would play with her,  
Calling the child her own *wee doshy ban*,  
And such caressing names as lie so sweet  
Upon the lips of Celtic motherhood.  
But who can trust the self-indulging frame  
When appetite has curbed the guiding will?  
Poor little Jinney, thro’ her parent’s sin  
Neglected, soon became a public waif,  
Like lambkin bleating on a lonely wild.

It happened in the early summer time,  
Ere the hot sun had browned the dancing leaves,  
Or dulled the voice of singing rivulets  
That bandied melodies with amorous birds,  
When Betty, with her man, poor Robin Lee,  
And barefoot Jinney, now three summers old,  
Had in their ramblings reached a village fair  
Ten dusty miles from Ballytumulty.  
There squatting in the shadow of a wall  
That formed the gable of “The Moiley Cow,”  
’Mid motley piles of damaged kitchen-ware  
Did Robin earn a tolerable wage,  
While Betty sought for customers around.

But when the roaring fair had run its course  
And fainter grew the lowing of the kine,  
As down the village street and o'er the bridge  
To uplands new they took their straggling way ;  
When farmers pressed around the tavern door,  
Across the foaming cup to bid adieu,  
Or clinch the bargains they began at morn,  
Then Robin cast aside his soldering tools  
And followed Betty in ; but not for long  
To know serenity. When in the till  
His last remaining coin the landlord dropped,  
Robin was bundled forth to sleep away,  
Prone on the ground, his potions' ill effects :  
While to a lane adjacent Betty hied  
To try conclusions with a giantess,  
Who vexed her inoffensive soul at morn.

But whither had the truant Jinney fled ?  
Unseen for hours, nor hindered by the care  
Of fond, reluctant mother, to the distant fields  
She strayed alone, an odd precocious elf,  
Where, feasting on the crusts she craved or stole  
From simple-minded children at the fair,  
She sat amid the clover, making chains  
Of daisies, till o'ercome with weariness,  
She fell asleep. Waking at dusk, she found  
The sun had left the sky, and silence reigned  
O'er all things. From the neighbouring road

No sound of passing vehicle was heard,  
And Jinney, wetted by the dew and faint  
With hunger, grew alarmed. A wheeling bat  
Against her forehead dashed, and with the shock  
She fell upon the ground and cried aloud ;  
But bravely she arose and reached the lane  
That led her to the road, where speedily  
A carriage passed, whose occupants espied  
The solitary mite in noisy grief.  
Stopping, they learned the cause, and soon  
between

The lady and her husband Jinney sat,  
Wiping her face and lisping all she knew  
About her home and slender history.  
Her name was Jinney, nothing else but that ;  
Her father mended broken pans and things ;  
Was always "on the spree," and mother, too ;  
And Jinney aye was hungry ; home was miles  
And miles away ; they slept in barns at night :  
Home with the lady she would like to go ;  
Her father and her mother minded not.

A lonely wife it was who questioned her,  
Who never knew the thrill a mother knows  
When her first babe lies drinking in its nest.  
Unsated by the love of sturdy lord,  
Too strong to have occasion for her care,  
And yearning still some weakling to sustain,

All, all her mother's unspent love rushed forth  
To Jinney, whom she longed to call her own.  
But while her husband acquiesced, he nursed  
The faint, yet foolish hope her parents' love  
Would seek her yet; so to some passing folk  
He told the tale, while to her future home  
Twice ten long miles away our Jinney sped.

No storm of grief did Betty's breast invade  
When, after victory o'er the giantess,  
She sobered down, and Jinney came no more  
To whimper at her mother's draggled skirt.  
The child, she said, provoked her, wanting bread,  
Aye wanting bread, when she had none to give;  
She guessed, withal, some farmer's rosy wife  
To hospitable home had carried her,  
So troubled not. But keenly Robin felt  
The loss of Jinney, and with deep concern  
Bewailed his dull neglect. Four weary days  
The fields around the village he explored  
With varying hopes and fears; but to his aid  
The dread police he shrewdly summoned not,  
Lest his misfortunes might be multiplied!  
Kind women watched him till he went away  
Disconsolate, with Betty at his heels,  
Walking as in a dream. Awaking soon,  
He loudly swore to Ballytumulty

Return he never would without the wean,  
Without the brave wee wean, now lost and gone.  
Well, if with equal firmness he had vowed  
No more to gratify the fell desire  
That spoiled him of his peace and made him  
mourn.

But no reform he knew. In sooth, his grief  
A deeper longing for indulgence bred,  
As if excess his memory could release  
From chains that bound it to the painful past.

At length in failing health the reckoning came,  
And Robin 'gan to droop. A hollow cough  
Soon told its tale, and even Betty feared  
His days were numbered. Lonely seemed the road  
To her, for he was silent, and no more  
For low carousal minded. 'Twas a grief  
She found not easy to be borne, yet one  
More tolerable than the gentle mood  
In which he hid himself—not answering back  
With scornful oath her warring words,  
According to his wont. As weeks passed on,  
And hope more sickly grew, 'twas good to mark,  
When faintly burned the taper of his life,  
The smouldering fire of virtues long concealed  
Wax daily stronger. Trembling now, he neared  
The awful threshold of the Land Unknown,  
And feared his woeful record barred the hope

Of mercy from the Maker he had scorned.  
Yet in his breast a longing to repair  
The evils wrought in bygone hours remained.  
So, yielding to the pressure of his wife,  
To Ballytumulty he turned his face,  
There 'mid his friends his suff'ring days to end.

Along the rugged slopes that crown the vale,  
Where lay the ruins of his former home,  
Behold them on their way. 'Tis late in March,  
And timid Spring not yet has power to slay  
Grim wounded Winter howling o'er the plain.  
Cold gusts of rain sweep upward from the Lough,  
And chill the weary travellers—toiling hard  
Since early morn across th' unsheltered bog.  
With little food, e'en Betty feels the strain,  
While Robin, hanging mutely on her arm,  
Is faint and dying. Whither shall they turn?  
No labourer's cot is near, no friendly barn;  
Only an empty church with steepled roof,  
And diamond window panes all shining cold.

Then, then awoke in Betty's rugged breast  
The kindly woman's nature, dormant long.  
Wringing her hands, she cried in her despair,  
"O God of Heaven, pity us this night."  
Tho' murmuring rather to herself the prayer  
Than to the unseen Father, He gave ear,

And oped her eyes, bedimmed by anxious tears,  
To spy a grassy laneway, skirting close  
A garden dotted o'er with silent graves.  
Soon, step by step, a broken stile they reached;  
Anon by devious turns the farmyard wide  
Pertaining to a rectory, unobserved  
Amid the trees. There ended Betty's quest:  
For, lo! a cosy harness room she found  
And made her own. A welcome hearth it showed,  
With the white ashes of a recent fire.  
Some children's toys about the floor were strewn,  
While a maimed rocking-horse the corner filled.  
In shorter time than needs to tell the tale,  
A glowing fire of turf its comfort shed  
On Robin, resting on a hay-built couch.  
But aye the deathly pallor of his face  
And glazing eye she noticed, fearing much  
His life would slip away ere food she found.  
In agony his hollow cheek she kissed,  
First time for years, and with her tattered skirt  
The death-dew from his brow she wiped away  
Moaning, "Och, Robin, is it come to this?"

Then forth she stole, and in the gloaming found  
The rectory kitchen, nor delayed to knock,  
Yet, shyly entering, did her woes recount  
To mild-faced maid with apron snowy white,  
The eldest daughter of a numerous house,

Who, as it chanced, was in authority  
In absence of her parents from the home.  
She, moved to sympathy by Betty's grief,  
Some goodly blankets found, and nourishment  
Adapted to the dying sufferer's need.  
But all too late her kindly service came;  
The feeble candle of poor Robin's life  
By blasts of dissipation long disturbed  
Now flickered in its socket, going out.  
Yet recked he nothing that his day was o'er,  
But, ah, the heaped-up memory of the past  
Like nightmare on his wounded spirit lay,  
And marred his slumbers. Often thro' the night  
He spoke of Jinney, who five summers past  
Had vanished like a dream: but from his lips  
No word of censure fell, as once it fell,  
Upon the wife whose new-born tenderness  
Had come to soothe him in his dying hour.

When thro' the cobwebs on the window pane  
The dawn its earliest rays began to pour,  
And low and sickly burned th' unheeded lamp,  
He restless turned him on his rustling couch,  
And feebly cried, "O Betty, if we had the Book—  
The Book that talks about the love of God."  
She thro' the untidy room a search began  
And found instead, amid the broken toys,  
A ragged hymn-book: 'twas the last to serve

The rectory children playing there at "Church."  
And long the rhymes of prayer and praise she read,  
Till one brief verse his dying fancy caught:

" Faint not when guilty and undone,  
With frowning death in view,  
The blood of Jesus Christ His Son  
Avails for even you."

Again, again by wakeful Robin urged,  
The simple lines she read till, broken sobs  
Preventing her, she laid the book aside.  
In truth, her grief for Robin passing hence  
And the remembrance of her own sad ways  
Left her as sick of heart as Robin's self,  
As eager for the comforting of heaven.  
So when he wondered if the words were true  
And fain would find them in the Book itself,  
Poor Betty to the rectory hurried back,  
The kindly daughter of the house to bring.  
She, nothing loath, the Way of Life declared,  
And with sweet gleanings from the sacred text  
She gently soothed the dying sufferer's ear,  
Dispelling doubt, assurance leading in,  
Faith cent'ring on the Death at Calvary.  
Anon, with Betty near to hold his hand,  
And whisper of the peace she too had found,  
He sighed his gratitude, and fell asleep.

At noon returned the rector and his wife,  
Glad to relieve their daughter of her care.  
Next day, in shadow of an ancient yew  
That sentinelled a group of humble graves  
In corner of that lonely trysting place,  
They scooped an earthen couch, and hid away  
The corpse that only one poor weeper owned.  
But from the clouds that dulled the churchyard sky,  
The sun broke out in genial sympathy,  
And filled the compass of that mouldy cell,  
As if to speak with nature's eloquence  
Of cloudless glory after life of gloom.

Beneath the rector's roof a home was found  
For Betty, where the door was ever shut  
Against the memory of her past misdeeds:  
Kind human hearts her native worth discerned,  
And, with the charity that heaven bestows,  
They lent their aid, unravelling with care  
The tangled threads of talents misapplied,  
And taught her how to turn them to account.  
It was a home of softening influence,  
Where lives harmonious holy impulse stirred  
To righteous imitation. Moved thereby  
Poor Betty struggled to redeem the past;  
In which fair aim the godly rector played  
No slender part, but led her in the path  
Of sweet obedience to the will divine

Revealed in Holy Writ. And as she learned,  
Thro' humble consciousness of hourly need,  
The saintly habit of continuous prayer,  
Her faith and love in sure proportion grew.  
So that in time her influence in the home  
Came not behind in fragrance that which flowed  
From the good rector and his gentle wife:  
For not more potent were the golden words,  
That fell unmeasured from her master's lips,  
Than the soft calm and self-control that marked  
The goings of her mistress in the house,  
Where, thro' ascendancy of grace, she proved  
A blessing to her husband, and a help.

How many were the messages fulfilled  
By Betty, who, as angel of her mistress,  
Was known as far as Ballytumulty,  
Three miles away, where folk respected her  
Whom once they had derided or condemned.  
Behold the virtue of a life transformed!  
But if at intervals it might befall  
Some thoughtless indiscretion brought distress;  
When, thro' the quick'ning of forgotten pride,  
She in the net was taken unawares  
And with her tongue spake unadvisedly;  
The lapse that trivial seemed in others' eyes  
To hers would bring the tears of self reproach,  
And send her stealing forth when darkness fell

To stand in dews of dusk by Robin's grave  
Where hollow winds sang endless requiems.  
There, linking with the past her present bliss,  
She mused upon her own unworthiness,  
And fresh enduement from on high implored  
To walk amid the snares that round her lay.

So passed away the years, the changing years,  
To all distributing in that dear home  
The common heritage of joy and care,  
Till suddenly one weary Sabbath eve  
An unseen messenger from Paradise  
The rector summoned, as he lay at rest  
In corner of his study; and he went,  
Not lingering for an instant to bestow  
His parting benison on those he loved.  
But while his loss the people sadly mourned,  
Doubting the Wisdom that removed their friend  
So swiftly from his cherished toil on earth,  
His widow rested mute, in heart assured  
He passed to fuller service in the skies.

With his departure, home was home no more,  
And Betty's mistress with her daughters twain,  
The remnant of a goodly progeny,  
Must needs forsake the rectory in the glens,  
With all its wealth of stream, and bird, and flower,  
Henceforth in sombre city to reside,

And Betty's grateful ministry no more  
Was needed. 'Twas a blow not less severe  
To her than to the kindly hearts who loved  
The sunshine of her silent cheerfulness,  
Impervious to the ruffling power of words;  
And carefully another home they sought,  
Where like appreciation she might share.

Then came at last the morn, the dreaded morn,  
When Betty, blind with weeping, bade farewell  
To those familiar faces loved so long.  
'Twas golden Autumn; warm and bright the day;  
With undiminished force the sun poured down  
His sultry rays, as if he would arrest  
The progress of decay in shrub and tree.  
Life lingering in all things seemed to cry  
To Betty, "Go not yet"; and as the cart,  
Of rustic build, with all her worldly goods  
Passed 'neath the silver poplars at the gate,  
A shower of withered leaves besprinkled her,  
As if the trees would weep in fellowship;  
While solitary robins flitted near,  
And sang a cheering song of sympathy.

Twice fifteen miles on that momentous day  
She travelled, and for leagues the journey led  
Thro' lonely moss, where desultory groups  
Of men and women shaped the sodden turf,  
Or piled the clumps for coming winter's need.

At hand were ragged little ones at play  
Round scattered smouldering fires, whose fragrant  
smoke  
Wreathed upwards in the mild October haze,  
And sweeter made the air, already sweet.  
Not rarely did she meet the groaning cart  
Laden with sheaves, last of the waiting "stooks"  
That filled the harvest field, now borne away  
For storage in the hagyard's ample stack.  
Once as they lumbering passed a village green,  
A tinker and his wife did Betty spy,  
With barefoot urchin toddling in the rere;  
And Betty started as with glistening eye  
She watched the group, and thought of former  
days.  
Sight of that little child recalled once more  
The memory, always dear, of her she lost.  
Did she yet live? And if the Lord allowed  
That one day they should meet, would Betty see  
In Jinney's weal the fruit of daily prayer?

The sun was sinking when, with weary frame  
Good Betty lighted from her springless cart,  
And at her future home a welcome found.  
A stately house it proved, magnificent  
Beyond the limit of expectancy,  
Where she was one of many brought to serve  
The splendid squire, his wife, and only child,—

Theirs by adoption, so the legend said—  
A maiden fair, of beauteous face and form,  
With native sweetness brooding in her eyes,  
Whose unaffected grace approval won  
From all who in her magic circle moved.

Now list the wondrous sequel to our tale,  
Tho' feeble is the pen that pictures it;  
But who in fitting words might paint the joy  
Tumultuous, yea, the agony that woke  
In Betty's bosom, when with startled gaze  
The daughter of the house she first beheld,  
And recognised with love intuitive,  
None other than the very babe she nursed  
At her own breast twice ten long years ago?  
The mole on Jinney's brow was evidence.  
To clasp her daughter in a wild embrace,  
Rain fervid kisses on her lips and eyes,  
To tell her name with tears of ecstasy  
And claim her as her offspring, hers in truth,  
Was the first impulse wildered Betty knew;  
But with that sudden thought a second came,  
Dear Jinney, ('twas the name that marked her yet,)  
Discerned her not, remembered her no more.  
How could she publish her identity,  
And bitter make the cup of Jinney's bliss?  
Should she at Jinney's cost enrich herself,  
And blight her daughter's fame before the world?

All these regards revolving in her mind  
Forbade the consummation coveted.  
Nor was the struggle long, tho' fierce at first,  
When she the sacrifice recalled to mind  
Of One Who for her sake had suffered loss,  
That thro' His poverty she might be rich.

So Betty bore her cross and daily died,  
Content in sweet obscurity to live,  
That Jinney's days unshadowed might remain.

But when three summers later rang the bells,  
The wedding bells, and Jinney gave her hand  
To noble scion of an ancient house,  
Whose ample forest crowned the neighbouring  
hills,  
The bride must needs have Betty come anon,  
'And play the needed rôle of housekeeper.  
For Betty's care was indispensable,  
Her love, said Jinney, like a mother's love.  
And when sweet children's voices filled the home,  
'Twas Betty's magic name they learned to lisp—  
The fairy power that stood for everything.

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